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SUBJECT: Jordan and EU Declare Reciprocal Liberalization  
Measures on Agriculture

¶1. Summary: Jordan and the EU declared reciprocal liberalization measures in agricultural trade on February 128. The change liberalizes some categories of agricultural products ahead of schedule. However, some Jordanian producers and exporters report that the benefits of the agreement will still be limited by "exaggerated" technical restrictions on Jordan's major agricultural exports to the EU, i.e., fresh fruits and vegetables. End Summary.

¶2. Jordanian-EU agricultural trade falls under the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement, which established an Association between the EU Member States and Jordan. The Agreement with Jordan entered into force 1 May 2002.

¶3. For the past three years, representatives of Jordan's agricultural sector, both public and private, have been engaged in formulating liberalization amendments to the agricultural trade agreement between Jordan and EU. The agreement has been seen by some Jordanian producers and exporters as trade restricting, hampered by permits bounded by specific time limitations and restricted quantity quotas available to Jordanian-origin agricultural products. The new reciprocal liberalization measures and amendments expand the umbrella of custom duty-free items, ad valorem tariffs, and leave in place the quantity quotas on most agricultural products.

¶4. The products on which restrictions are maintained include virgin olive oil, fresh cut flowers, cucumbers, "new" potatoes, garlic, citrus and strawberries. All of these products will be liberalized by the year 2010, except for virgin olive oil and fresh cut-flowers which will remain subject to quantity quotas.

¶5. Three other products (cookies, chocolate preparations, and white chocolate) will continue to be subject to ordinary applied customs tariffs.

¶6. Newly-appointed Minister of Agriculture Akif Al-Zu'bi has long pushed for more market access in the EU. Many Jordanian agri-businessmen and exporters believe that these new measures will not solve the problem of "exaggerated" technical restrictions on Jordan's major agricultural exports to EU -- fresh vegetables and fruits.

¶7. The EU supports Jordanian agriculture indirectly through many technical provisions, including laboratories and capacity building, and through twinning programs between EU and Jordanian counterpart institutions.

¶8. Jordan imported US\$1.445 billion in agricultural

products in 2005, US\$185 million of which came from the U.S.

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